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**LARRY CRAIG**

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**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **CRAIG SECURES \$7.6 MILLION FOR GOWEN FIELD**

**Additional \$1.7 million coming to Orchard Training Area**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Idaho Senator Larry Craig was pleased to announce today that he has secured \$7.625 million for Gowen Field in the conference report for the FY 2008 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs (Milcon-VA) Appropriations bill. This funding will cover planning, design and construction of a permanent railhead facility at Gowen Field. Congress also honored President Bush's request for \$1.7 million for the Orchard Training Area's Urban Assault Course.

When active-duty, National Guard or Reserve units come to train at Gowen Field or the adjacent Orchard Training Area, they ship their heavy equipment by rail. Gowen cannot currently meet Army Strategic Mobility Program rail deployments because it has no permanent facilities for loading and unloading military vehicles from railcars. Temporary facilities are constructed every year to accommodate units coming to the Gowen Field Training Area for Annual Training. However, these temporary facilities are unsafe, inefficient, and costly.

With the \$7.625 million, Senator Craig has secured more than \$22.8 million for this project. This year's funding will construct a permanent railhead, which is required to accomplish the mobilization mission requirement for loading and unloading 63 railcars per day. Use of the rail siding at Mountain Home Air Force Base cannot accomplish the mission because it is located 22 miles away and can only handle wheeled vehicles. This project will enhance the readiness of units across the nation that conduct Annual Training at Gowen Field's Orchard Training Area by allowing them to ship their vehicles by rail, saving training time and money as compared to other shipping modes.

"It's very exciting that we now have the means to finish this project at Gowen," Craig said. "Having a permanent railhead means the units training at Gowen can spend more time there training, instead of waiting for their gear to get on or off the train. We won't have to use taxpayer dollars to build a temporary facility every year. And now, it's much safer, too."

In addition, President Bush requested, and the conference report includes, \$1.7 million to build an Urban Assault Course at the Orchard Training Area. The course will be used to train soldiers in urban warfare tactics, an important part of Operation Iraqi Freedom and the greater war on terrorism.

"Idaho has long been a state well-suited for military training, with excellent facilities that aren't threatened by urban encroachment," Craig continued. "On top of that, the people of Idaho have always strongly supported the military. With these factors in mind, funding for the Orchard Training Area is a good investment."

Once approved by the House and Senate, the conference report will go to the President for his signature.